

**SCMS dossier for Pedagogy Award** (an edited version)

Chuck Kleinhans

**One. C.V. for Pedagogy** (full c.v. online)**Two. Course innovations**

Here I highlight some, but not all, the course innovations I introduced in the past 30 years.

**Theory & Practice.** Because I have worked as a media scholar/critic and as a creative media maker, much of my teaching ranging from introductory courses for majors and non-majors to advanced graduate seminars has involved theory/studies and practice/creative work. Part of this is the hallmark of my department. For example, MFAs are required to take graduate studies courses, and PhDs are required to learn at least introductory production. Both kinds of inquiry can be used in many courses.

**INTRO**

- introductory production courses for RTF majors (designed with Citron and Seiter): integrated cultural analysis with media making; developed extensive teaching materials (handouts, slides, sample clips, etc.) used by all faculty and TAs who taught the courses; required S8mm location documentary (group projects) in Chicago to get students into a different world.
- introductory studies/production courses for non-majors (initially for Ford Foundation Integrated Arts initiative; later evolution into department Media Literacy course). Pioneered use of university Mac computer labs for teaching intro media skills (later integrated into all RTF intro courses).
- developed large lecture/TA discussion Intro to Popular Culture based around music from folk to vernacular to pop/commercial, etc. using blues, R&B, Appalachian folk, country, bluegrass, rock, hip-hop and rap, bhangra, disco, house, electronica, etc. and ranging through history of recorded music, music in radio history, interrelation of sound recording, broadcasting, film, etc.

**ADVANCED UNDERGRAD/GRAD**

- team taught large lecture class for RTF and Theatre with Susan Lee (Dance) on musical comedy films combining film analysis and dance/choreography analysis (and demonstrations by Lee)
- team taught Third World Film with Manjunath Pendakur (RTF) combining aesthetic and political economy analysis. resulted in conference presentations and article: with Manji Pendakur, "Learning Together: Team Teaching a Course on Third World Film from a Shared Marxist Perspective, *Jump Cut* no. 33 (March 88), pp. 82-90.  
<<http://www.ejumpcut.org/archive/onlinessays/JC33folder/MxtFilmStudy.html>>
- At NU: first faculty taught course on feminism and film (1977); first course on film melodrama and soap opera (1980); first course on stars (1980); first course on Cuban film (1980); first course on African American film (1984); first course on reality TV (1996).
- In response to Provost and Dean's request for "capstone" courses for seniors developed Hollywood in the Nineties combining aesthetic/cinematic, industrial/economic/institutional, and cultural analysis of one decade. Under enrollment pressures it evolved into a large undergrad class; also taught as grad course for the MA in Liberal Arts program.
- My most frequently taught undergrad classes have been History and Criticism of Experimental Film and Contemporary Experimental Film and Video. In both courses students are required to

do field work by visiting 5 events in Chicago's media artworld and write reports. In addition to individual works the course deals with the institutional basis for the experimental art world and this makes the experience concrete, present, and memorable and gets them out of NU's suburban cocoon.

### **GRADUATE**

- various graduate courses specifically designed for RTF MFA and PhD students in the same classroom with PhDs required to do some appropriate production and MFAs to write critical essays. (Syllabus for D26/526 Cross Cultural Media in this dossier). This included Theory and Practice team taught with Dana Hodgdon (structuralism; commercials) and also Michelle Citron (personal/autobiography) and later solo Theory and Practice courses ( e.g. Light/Color/Composition; Found Sound and Recycled Images; Digital Interactive Environment; Word/Screen/Motion)
- Graduate seminar courses specifically designed to work with and serve our adjoining programs (PhD in Performance Studies; PhD in Theatre and Drama) and attract students from comparative literature, national language and literatures, sociology, comm studies, etc.: Film Melodrama, Action Film, Realism and Naturalism, Theory of Comedy, Well Made Play and Classical Hollywood Film, Russian Formalism and Soviet Silent Film, Brecht and Film, Jameson and Film, Bourdieu, Textual Analysis, Visual Culture. The Cross Cultural course also serves Performance Studies (which has a strong ethnographic direction), Latin American studies, Anthropology, Sociology, comparative literature.
- Graduate class on Sexual Representation. Article included in this dossier. "Teaching Sexual Images: Some Pragmatics," *Jump Cut* no. 40 (March, 1996), pp. 119-122  
<<http://www.ejumpcut.org/archive/onlinessays/JC40folder/TeachPornPragmatics.html>>

### **Three. Publications on Pedagogy.**

#### **Four: Service: Pedagogy (selected)**

#### **Five. Supplementary**

A significant amount of my professional work involves curating film/video events which are usually exhibited to the general public in museum, gallery, and other venues. These are often linked to college and universities, but invite an audience that is specifically outside of the disciplinary and professional field of media studies. Similarly, I often speak to such general audiences introducing and discussing creative work, media issues, and so forth. My creative work has been exhibited in a similar way to a more general audience. A full listing of these events can be found on my personal web site.

From the start in 1974, JUMP CUT has been committed to working with new and emerging writers, as well as people outside of media studies proper. This has been especially so in relation to topic areas and issues we were among the first to develop: feminist, gay/lesbian/queer, race/ethnic, and class analysis and the study of Third World film, new theoretical developments, sexual representation, documentary film, activist media, etc. There is an important teaching function in finding and working with writers to help them develop their analysis and skill in expression. Full access to all the back issues of JUMP CUT is found at our web site: [www.ejumpcut.org](http://www.ejumpcut.org).

**Six. Nominator's statement** (Jyotsna Kapur). [Extensively quoted from letters of support.]

**Seven. Syllabus:** RTF 426 Cross Cultural Analysis

### **Eight. Successful Assignments**

I discussed some of this above under curriculum, and some examples are in the syllabus for 526 and the article on teaching sexual representation. A brief example of what I aim for in assignments would be this from a graduate course on Realism. I had the students come to my apartment to shoot a short film called "Serving Suggestion." They had to bring a packaged food which had a picture of the product/meal on the container with the disclaimer "serving suggestion." We prepared the foods (and ate them after the shoot) and then each was recorded with a slow pan over from the advertised presentation to the actual product. The blueberry blintzes were especially memorable, looking like a plate of tumors. The exercise was fun and also gave us all a chance to compare and contrast mediated image with consumable reality as well as to reflect on Bazin's argument for the privileged realism of the sequence shot.

My film theory courses have always included close analysis of scenes as a way of having students first see how complex moving images and sound films and tapes are, and how they raise questions for analysis. Then, the tools of semiotics, close textual analysis, visual studies, psychoanalysis, feminism, and so forth can be seen as possible ways of investigating. I often describe film theory as a "desperate attempt to catch up with film practice." This not only validates the MFAs in the class, but also encourages, by the end of the course, seeing theory as a practice that should be useful, and which can be tested, rather than just taken as a set of ex cathedra truths or dictums. One such close analysis of the MGM musical *Lady Be Good* resulted in an SCMS panel on the film and subsequent publication of articles in JUMP CUT by Jane Gaines, Scott Brewer, and myself. (available online at [www.ejumpcut.org](http://www.ejumpcut.org), issue 31, 1986).

In the undergrad intro classes an always successful assignment which was adapted to still photography, video, super 8mm, websites, and computer graphics was to describe yourself without presenting an image of yourself. In one memorable project, an undergrad created a web site that featured all of her ex-boyfriends with a detailed (comic) list of their faults and why she broke up with them. Portraits of others and autobiographical/diary projects have also worked well. In the Media Literacy course groups that ran throughout the course produced final projects fusing critical analysis and audio-visual presentation such as a detailed analysis of the Disney animation narrative formula. A similar assignment in my recent Hong Kong cinema course created groups fusing RTF majors with Asian Studies students to study the cultural basis for film genres, each group contributing their expertise to the final reports.

For graduate courses on cultural analysis, I devised an exercise in which certain classes are designated as "fashion statement" days and students have to do a catwalk and explain the cultural meaning of their apparel. The first time is pretty mundane, but by the end some folks use it to act out and act up: club clothes, a Ringling Bros. clown, an EMS medic, cross-dressing, sexy lingerie, full Goth tattoos, sari and bangles, etc. have all appeared. In any case, it trains people in learning to read cultural clues that are otherwise, taken-for-granted, that is ideological. For a course highlighting cultural consumption, ethnographic location visits included Chinatown, Petco (pet supply store), Megamall (Latin American stalls), tattoo parlor, etc. as a way of understanding how cultural differences shape different consumption patterns. Various syllabi posted on my personal web site.

<http://www.ejumpcut.org/gatewaypages/kleinhansfolder/kleinhans.html>

### **Nine. Support letters from colleagues and former students**

### **Ten. Student scholarship and production**

It is hard to specify this area. Perhaps two recent undergrad examples will suffice.

As an advisor on my junior year independent study and senior thesis—both of which focused on World War II military training film—Chuck proved to be an amazing asset, providing me with excellent feedback, scholarly resources, and support throughout my writing process. In my independent study, Chuck helped focus my research and ideas down from the U.S. military's entire output of training films during World War II (an enormous collection of films) to those training films that dealt specifically with venereal disease. My independent study culminated in my paper "World War II VD Training Films: Disease, Culture, and American Wartime Culture," which won Northwestern's George C. Casey Prize for the Best Undergraduate Essay on a Topic Related to Gender. Through Chuck's mentorship, I was also able to present at *Film & History's* 2004 conference on "War in Film, Television, and History." (support letter from Eric Hoyt)

Arturo Menchaca developed a creative project on the physics of perception with an independent study after taking my Experimental Film course and also designed a very successful quarter long series with the Block Cinema on structural film, a remarkably ambitious series which included guests speakers Tom Gunning, Fred Camper, Mark Kerins, Brian Price, Bruce Jenkins, and others.

Chuck's wisdom had suddenly opened a door for me. I truly began to "get" experimental films, and not only enjoyed watching them, but wanted to make my own. So I continued to pursue my newfound interest outside of class, and Chuck actively cultivated my growing interest in theorizing about and creating experimental films....In 2005 he supported my application for the Undergraduate Research Grant, which I was subsequently awarded, and then served as my mentor for the grant. My project consisted of making a series of short "structural" films and Chuck offered valuable insight, both because he was quite familiar with the structural tradition and because he was well-aware of how my personal interests and tastes had developed during the course of the school year. His suggestions led me to rethink my creative processes, ultimately making me a better filmmaker.

In the spring of 2006, with the knowledge gained from Chuck's classes, as well as his own personal encouragement and support, I was able to realize perhaps my most significant accomplishment to date: curating *A Cinema of Physics and Perception*, a quarter-long experimental film series at Northwestern's Block Cinema. Chuck gave me crucial advice when it came to programming the series and kindly agreed to write an essay that was included alongside my own in the series pamphlet.

I could not have been happier with the way the series turned out, and can safely say that I never would have even conceptualized the series if it had not been for Chuck sharing his wisdom with me over the past two years. With his characteristic sense of humor and a genuine concern for my edification, Chuck showed me that one can at once be a serious scholar and a wide-eyed child when watching and creating films, and that the intellectual and experiential components should never outweigh one another. In doing so, he forever altered the way I understand and create films. I count him as the most significant professor of my educational career.

Over the years, many MFA students have included work that began in my courses in their final portfolio. Some of my PhD students have made creative work which has been exhibited, such as Chad Raphael (now teaching at Santa Clara University) whose portrait of an immigrant campus food service worker detailed her life between Mexico and the US. I directed the dissertations of these students who have all maintained an active media production since getting their PhDs: Hyunsoek Seo, Jeffrey Skoller, Ellen Seiter, Carole Harmel, Blaine Allan, Elizabeth K. Jackson, Tulin Yilbar-Serto, Virginia Keller, Toni Perrine, Chris List, Ilene Goldman, Gabriel Gomez, Eilish McCormick, David Douglas. [details on request]

Almost all of my PhD students presented conference papers and published articles that came out of my classes and/or the dissertation. For some the dissertation evolved directly into a book: Straayer, Doll, Curry, Perrine, List, Kapur, Martin, Skoller.

**Media-centered extra-curricular involvement with students**

Various examples are listed on my personal website c.v. ranging from introducing and speaking for student organized programs (Gay-Lesbian Alliance, women's films, Gender Studies), faculty advising the Block Cinema student program committee, Faculty Advisor, WNUR, 1984-1990. [7200 watt FM station broadcasts "New Music" format to most of greater Chicago area]

**Eleven. List of dissertations directed** (at the time 41 completed; 4 in progress) and MFA committees (directed—5-- and served on--22)

**Twelve. Essay on pedagogy.**

"Teaching Sexual Images: Some Pragmatics," *Jump Cut* no. 40 (March, 1996), pp. 119-122  
<<http://www.ejumpcut.org/archive/onlinessays/JC40folder/TeachPornPragmatics.html>>